MARVEL COMICS
THE CHILD WITHIN: PART 1 OF 6
the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
WHERE "KRAVEN'S" LAST HUNT" ENDED...
...VERMIN'S HUNT BEGINS!
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178
JULY
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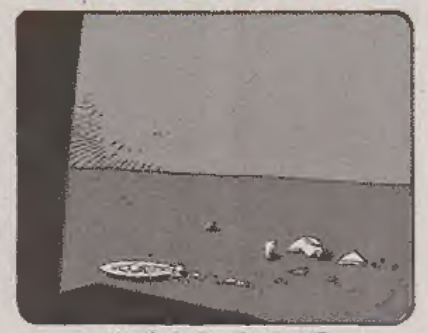
50 YEARS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA
1941 – 1991

BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, STUDENT PETER PARKER GAINED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF AN ARACHNID! ARMED WITH HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS, THE RELUCTANT SUPER HERO STRUGGLES WITH SINISTER SUPER-VILLAINS, MAKING ENDS MEET, AND MAINTAINING SOME SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE!

# Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!™

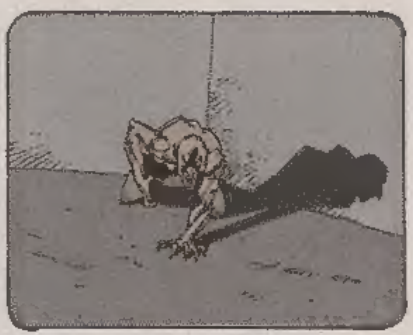
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF. NO ONE'S GOING TO HURT YOU.



YOU'VE GO TO COME OUT.

YOU CAN'T HIDE IN THE SHADOWS FOREVER.

THAT'S IT.

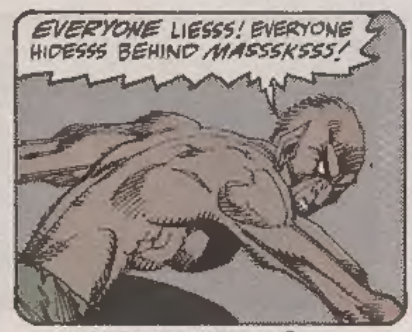


DON'T BE AFRAID.

I WANT TO HELP YOU.

NO. I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.

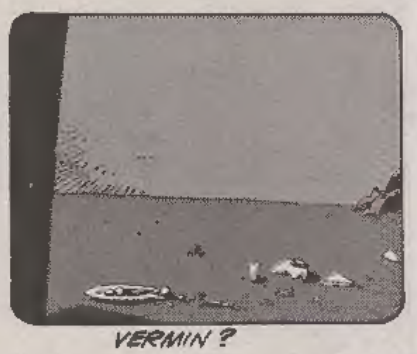
WHY WOULD I LIE TO YOU?




WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT KIND OF MASKS?

WHO LIED TO YOU?

VERMIN... WHO LIED TO YOU?



VERMIN?

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vermin?
i'm not vermin!
... i'm...
free!
thought they could keep me locked up.. hidden away...
...behind the wallsss... behind the massskssss...
but I showed them. i showed them.
can't keep me hidden. can't keep me locked away.
no matter how hard they try, I'll always break out. climb up. into the light.
NOOOOOOOOO!!!
hate the light. hateithateit hateit!!!

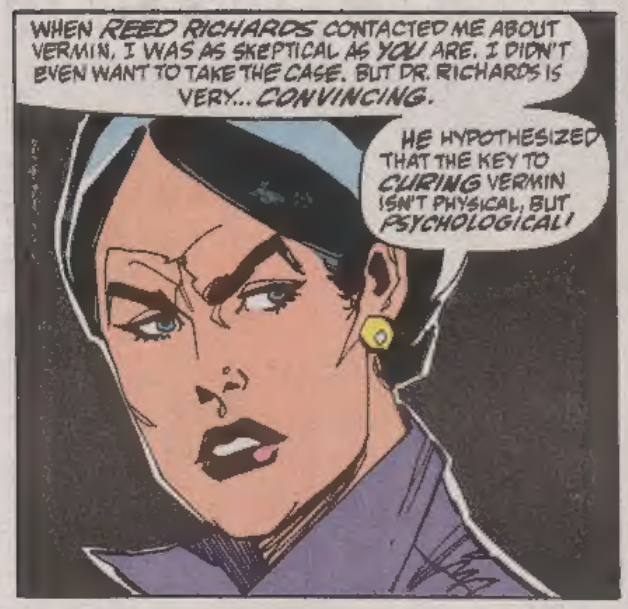
HATE!
IT!!
that'sss why I stay down here... in the dark... in the shadows... safe and warm and...
...but i don't want to hide anymore!
i don't want to be locked away!!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
YOU CAN'T HIDE ME AWAY FOREVER!
MISTER...?
HUNGAH?
littleboy?
WHATCHA DOING?
ssscared littleboy.
WHO ARE YOU?
HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
I-I'M NOT SURE. I... I JUST KNOW THAT I DON'T WANNA BE HERE.
WILL YOU HELP ME, MISTER?
ssscared little meat.
WILL YOU HELP ME GET HOME?
HOME?
home.

# THE CHILD WITHIN PART ONE:

# UP FROM THE DEPTHS

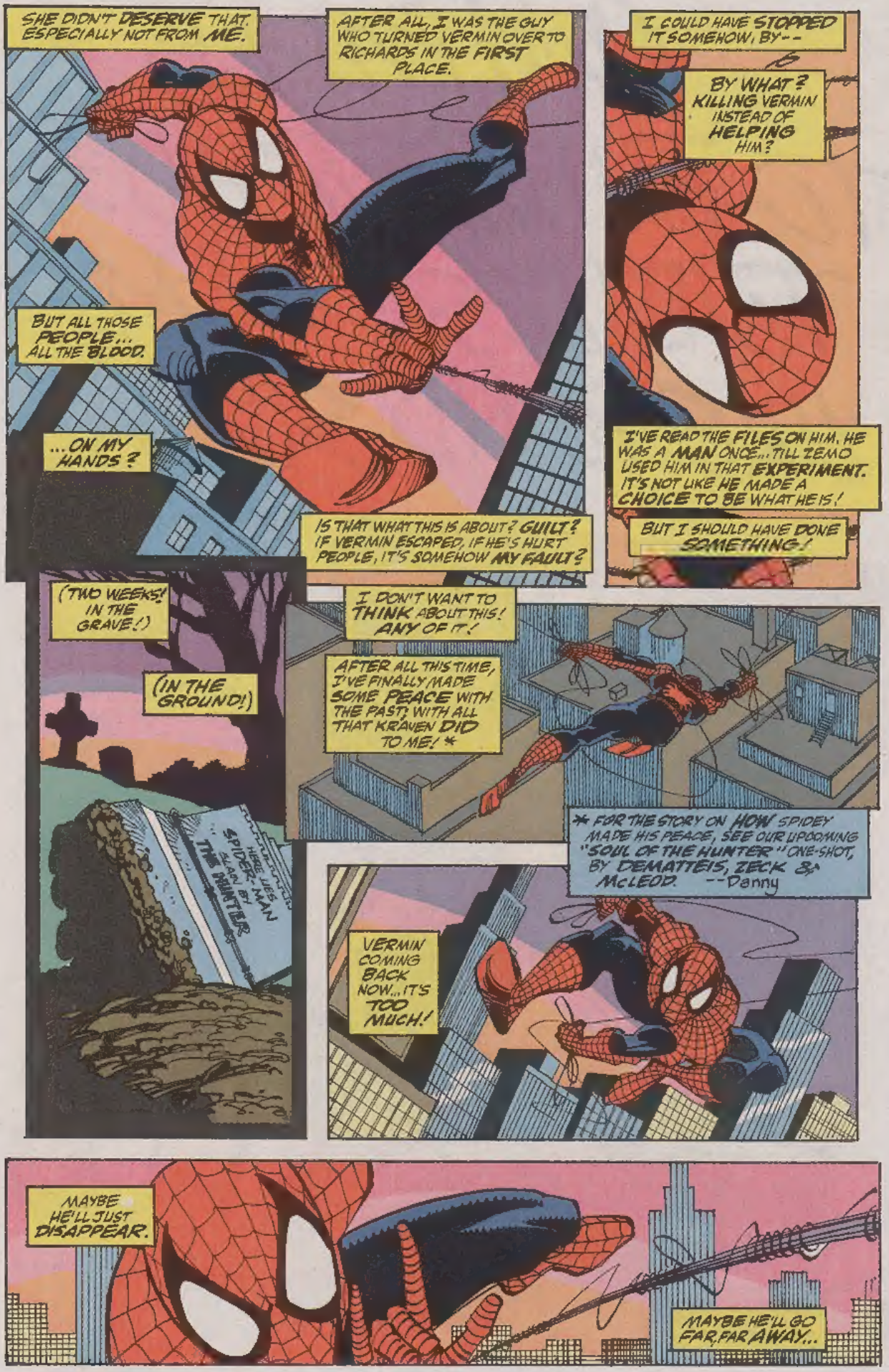
J.M. DeMATTEIS writer | SAL BUSCEMA artist | RICK PARKER letterer | BOB SHAREN colorist | DANNY FINGEROTH editor | TOM DeFALCO editor in chief

HIS ESCAPE WAS... BLOODY--AND BAFFLING.
IT'S NOT BAFFLING TO ME, DR. KAFKA--VERMIN JUST MIGHT BE THE MOST VICIOUS OPPONENT I'VE EVER FACED.
BUT WE WERE MAKING SO MUCH PROGRESS--
PROGRESS? WITH HIM? YOU'RE LIVING IN A FOOL'S PARADISE.
I THOUGHT I WAS RID OF HIM! I ALWAYS THINK I'M RID OF THEM--
--BUT THEN THEY COME CRAWLING UP OUT OF THE SLIME AGAIN!
PIDER-MAN
LAIN BY
HE HUNTER
(OUT OF THE GRAVE!)
...I KNOW THIS IS HARD FOR YOU. THE MEDIA HAD A FIELD DAY WITH THAT WHOLE KRAVEN AFFAIR... BUT VERMIN ISN'T SOMEONE TO BE HATED--
--HE'S TO BE PITIED.
PITIED? DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE THAT...THING HAS MURDERED?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE DID TO THEM AFTER HE KILLED THEM?
(HE'S NOT HUMAN!)
(HE EATS PEOPLE!)


WHEN REED RICHARDS CONTACTED ME ABOUT VERMIN, I WAS AS SKEPTICAL AS YOU ARE. I DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO TAKE THE CASE. BUT DR. RICHARDS IS VERY... CONVINCING.
HE HYPOTHESIZED THAT THE KEY TO CURING VERMIN ISN'T PHYSICAL, BUT PSYCHOLOGICAL!

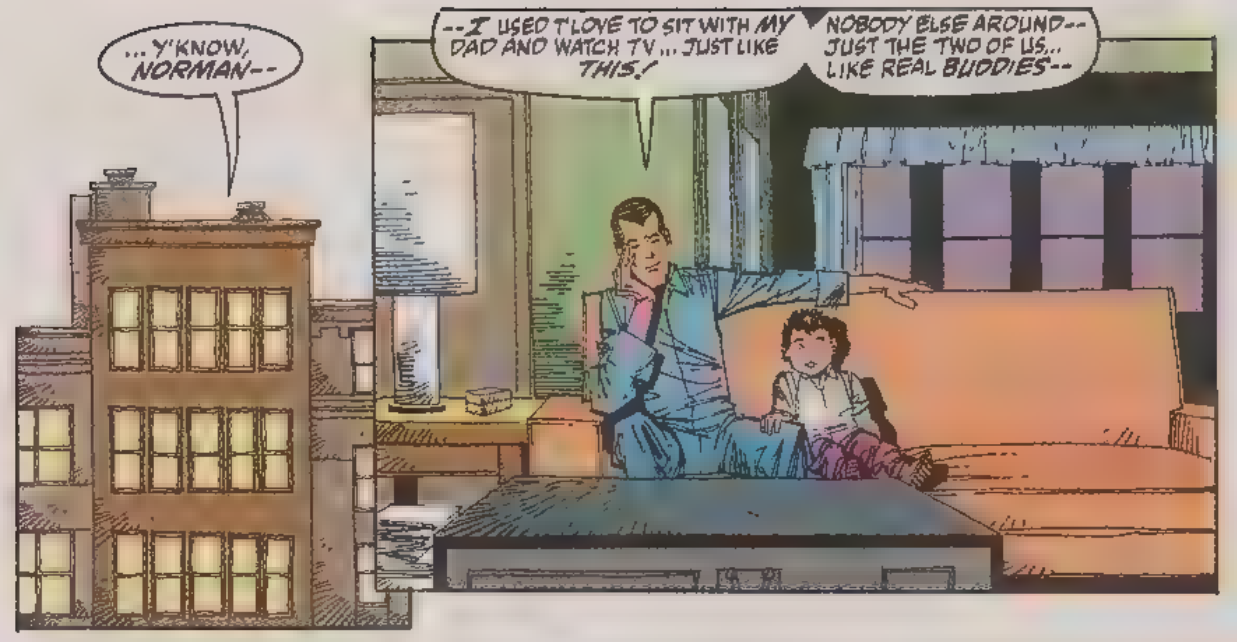
I'VE SPENT MONTHS EXPLORING VERMIN'S PSYCHE. USING HYPNO-THERAPY TO MOVE DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS OF HIS MIND--
--SEEKING OUT THE PERSON BURIED THERE BY BARON ZEMO.
I KNOW HIM NOW-- IN A WAY YOU NEVER COULD--AND I KNOW I CAN HELP HIM.

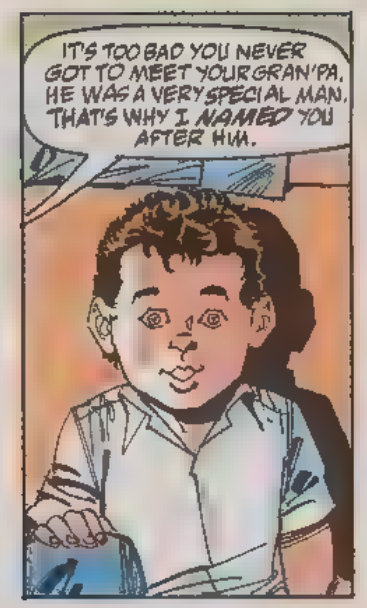
I'M SURE THE FAMILIES OF THE PEOPLE VERMIN KILLED WHEN HE ESCAPED--
-- ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

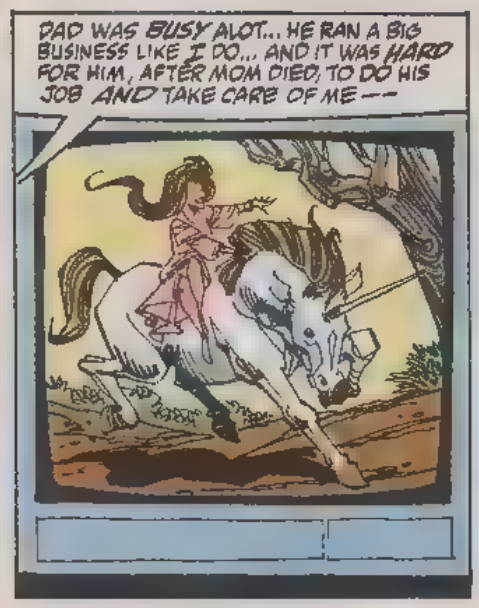

SHE DIDN'T DESERVE THAT. ESPECIALLY NOT FROM ME.
AFTER ALL, I WAS THE GUY WHO TURNED VERMIN OVER TO RICHARDS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I COULD HAVE STOPPED IT SOMEHOW, BY--
BY WHAT? KILLING VERMIN INSTEAD OF HELPING HIM?
BUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE... ALL THE BLOOD.
...ON MY HANDS?
I'VE READ THE FILES ON HIM. HE WAS A MAN ONCE... TILL ZEMO USED HIM IN THAT EXPERIMENT. IT'S NOT LIKE HE MADE A CHOICE TO BE WHAT HE IS!
BUT I SHOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING!
IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT? GUILT? IF VERMIN ESCAPED, IF HE'S HURT PEOPLE, IT'S SOMEHOW MY FAULT?
(TWO WEEKS! IN THE GRAVE!)
(IN THE GROUND!)
I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT THIS! ANY OF IT!
AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I'VE FINALLY MADE SOME PEACE WITH THE PAST; WITH ALL THAT KRAVEN DID TO ME! *
* FOR THE STORY ON HOW SPIDEY MADE HIS PEACE, SEE OUR UPCOMING "SOUL OF THE HUNTER" ONE-SHOT, BY DEMATTEIS, ZECK & McLEOD. --Danny
VERMIN COMING BACK NOW... IT'S TOO MUCH!
MAYBE HE'LL JUST DISAPPEAR.
MAYBE HE'LL GO FAR, FAR AWAY...

...AND NEVER...
...SHOW...
...HIS...
...FACE...
...AGAIN.
for a moment... I thought I sssmelled...
no. there'sss nothing here.
FREE AGAIN. HUNGRY AGAIN. MUSSST EAT BEFORE--
NO. YA CAN'T STOP NOW. YOU'VE GOTTA GET ME HOME.
PLEASE, MISTER-- GET ME HOME!
OF COURSSSE. OF COURSSSE. I'LL TAKE YOU HOME! I'LL--
YOU--
--TRUST ME?
WHY?
I DUNNO. I JUST DO.

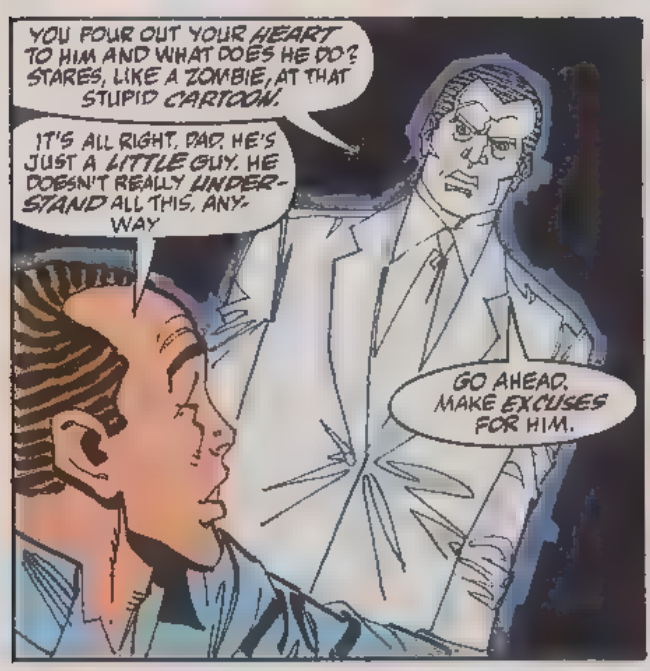
littleboy. ssso 555oft.
ssso 555weet.
and
he
trussstsss
me.
... PULLING ME BACK.
NO.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
AS I SWUNG BY BEFORE...
... I COULD'VE SWORN I FELT A SLIGHT BUZZING OF MY SPIDER-SENSE...

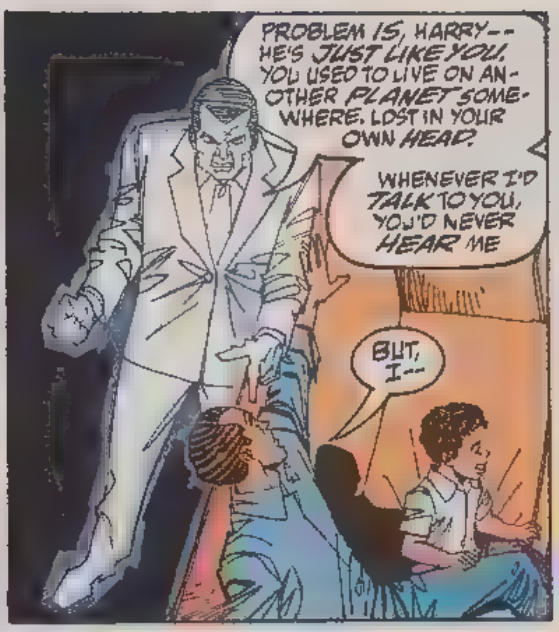

...Y'KNOW, NORMAN--
--I USED T'LOVE TO SIT WITH MY DAD AND WATCH TV ... JUST LIKE THIS.
NOBODY ELSE AROUND-- JUST THE TWO OF US... LIKE REAL BUDDIES--


IT'S TOO BAD YOU NEVER GOT TO MEET YOUR GRAN'PA. HE WAS A VERY SPECIAL MAN. THAT'S WHY I NAMED YOU AFTER HIM.

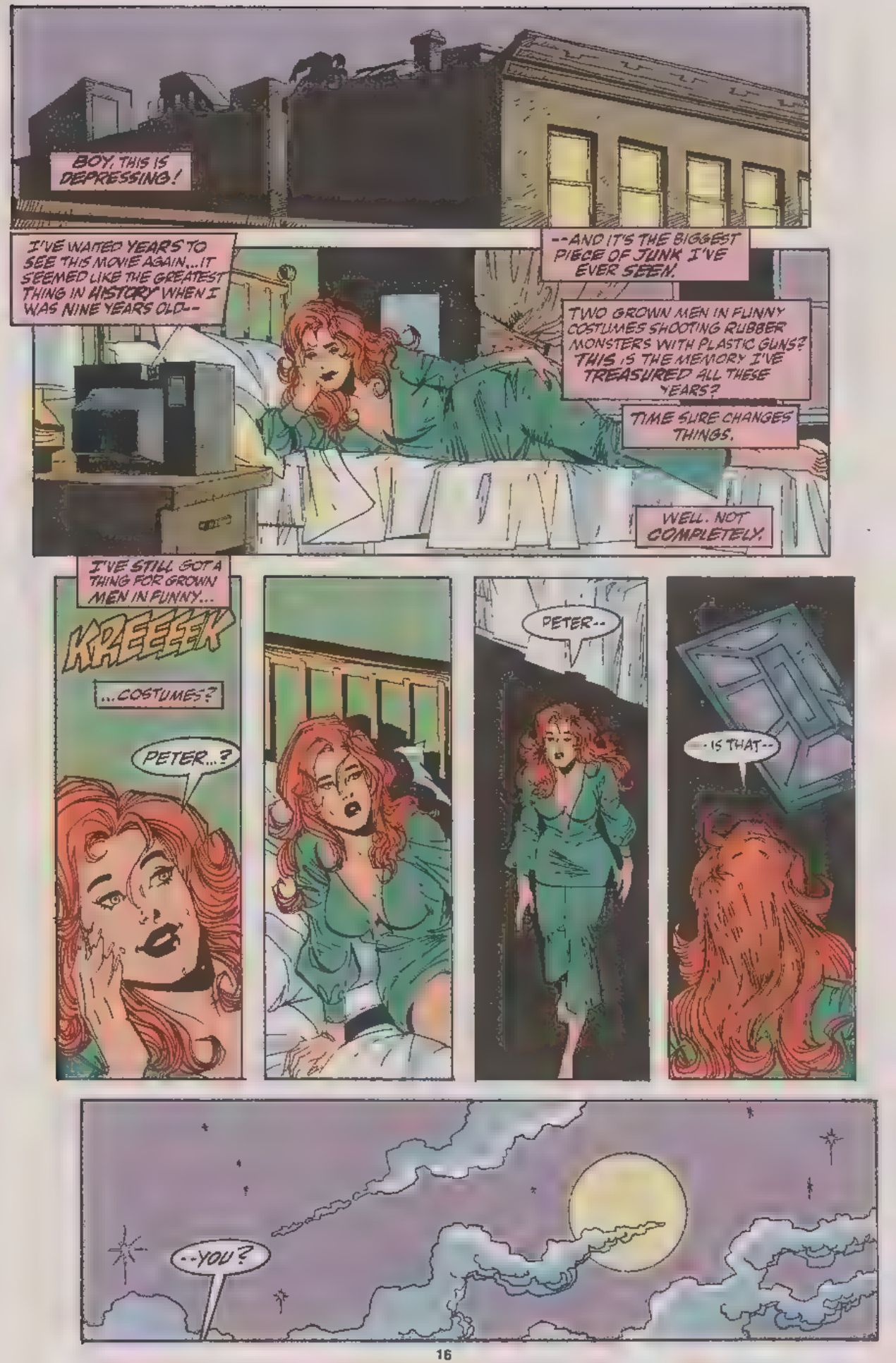

DAD WAS BUSY ALOT... HE RAN A BIG BUSINESS LIKE I DO... AND IT WAS HARD FOR HIM, AFTER MOM DIED, TO DO HIS JOB AND TAKE CARE OF ME--

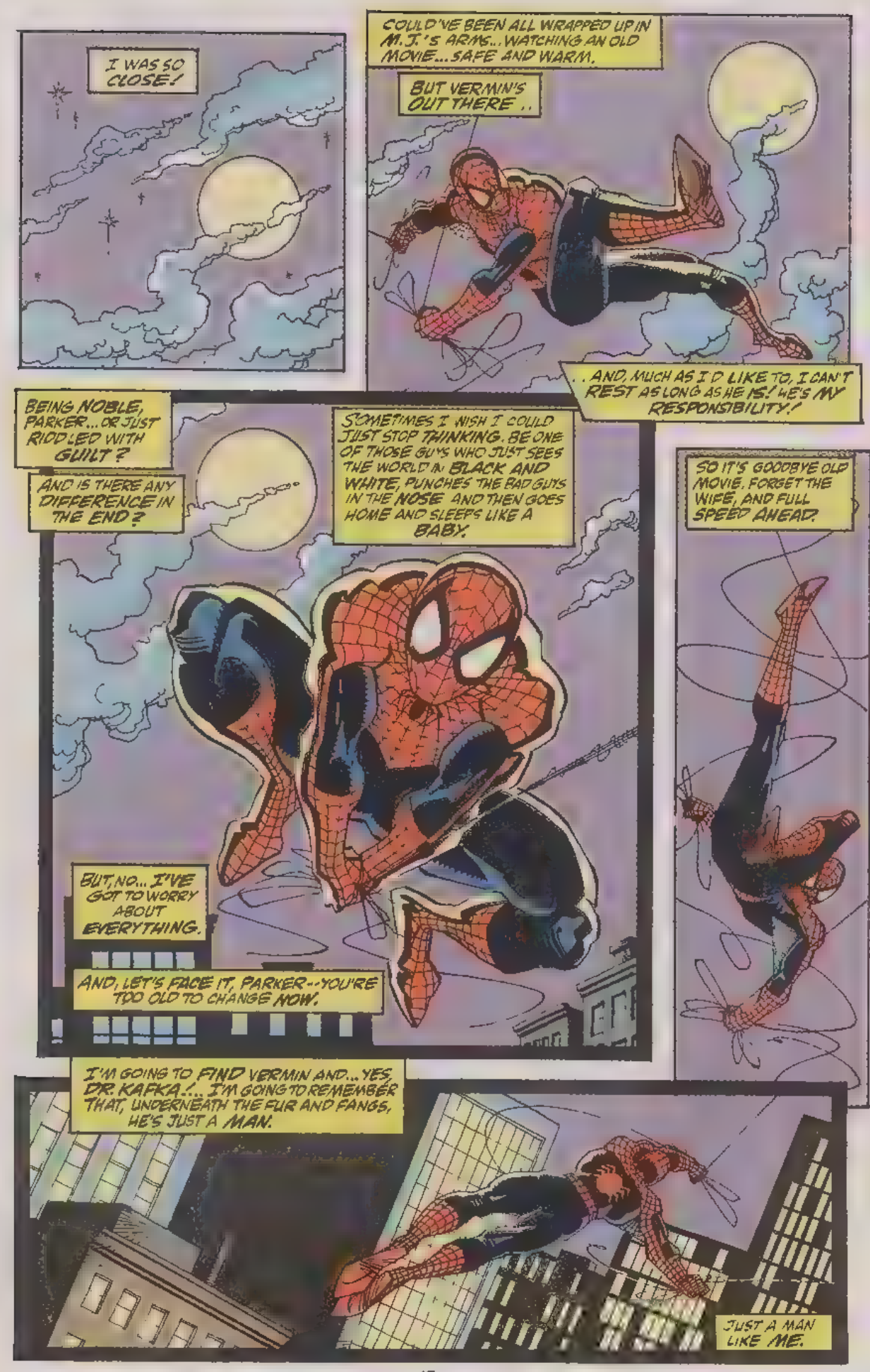
--BUT HE DID HIS BEST, Y'KNOW? HE REALLY LOVED--
HE'S NOT LISTENING TO YOU, HARRY.


YOU POUR OUT YOUR HEART TO HIM AND WHAT DOES HE DO? STARES, LIKE A ZOMBIE, AT THAT STUPID CARTOON.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD. HE'S JUST A LITTLE GUY. HE DOESN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND ALL THIS, ANYWAY
GO AHEAD. MAKE EXCUSES FOR HIM.


PROBLEM IS, HARRY-- HE'S JUST LIKE YOU. YOU USED TO LIVE ON ANOTHER PLANET SOMEWHERE. LOST IN YOUR OWN HEAD.
WHENEVER I'D TALK TO YOU, YOU'D NEVER HEAR ME
BUT, I--

NO MORE OF YOUR LAME EXCUSES!
I DON'T WANT YOU RAISING THAT BOY TO BE WEAK! WHEN YOU TALK TO HIM-- HE'S SUPPOSED TO LISTEN!
NOW MAKE HIM LISTEN!
NORMAN... DADDY'S TALKING TO YOU. A-AND WHEN DADDY TALKS TO YOU, YOU HAVE TO LISTEN.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
NORMAN, I'M TALKING TO YOU.
NORMAN!
NORMAN!!
WHY'RE YOU YELLING, DADDY? DID I-- DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
NO, BEAUTIFUL BOY-- YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG. I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE YELLED.
DADDY LOVES YOU.


BOY, THIS IS DEPRESSING!
I'VE WAITED YEARS TO SEE THIS MOVIE AGAIN...IT SEEMED LIKE THE GREATEST THING IN HISTORY WHEN I WAS NINE YEARS OLD--
--AND IT'S THE BIGGEST PIECE OF JUNK I'VE EVER SEEN.
TWO GROWN MEN IN FUNNY COSTUMES SHOOTING RUBBER MONSTERS WITH PLASTIC GUNS? THIS IS THE MEMORY I'VE TREASURED ALL THESE YEARS?
TIME SURE CHANGES THINGS.
WELL. NOT COMPLETELY.
I'VE STILL GOT A THING FOR GROWN MEN IN FUNNY...
KRAEEEK
...COSTUMES?
PETER...?
PETER--
--IS THAT--
--YOU?


I WAS SO CLOSE!
COULD'VE BEEN ALL WRAPPED UP IN M.J.'S ARMS... WATCHING AN OLD MOVIE... SAFE AND WARM.
BUT VERMIN'S OUT THERE..
..AND, MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO, I CAN'T REST AS LONG AS HE IS! HE'S MY RESPONSIBILITY!
BEING NOBLE, PARKER... OR JUST RIDDLED WITH GUILT?
AND IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE IN THE END?
SOMETIMES I WISH I COULD JUST STOP THINKING. BE ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO JUST SEES THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE, PUNCHES THE BAD GUYS IN THE NOSE AND THEN GOES HOME AND SLEEPS LIKE A BABY.
SO IT'S GOODBYE OLD MOVIE, FORGET THE WIFE, AND FULL SPEED AHEAD!
BUT, NO... I'VE GOT TO WORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING.
AND, LET'S FACE IT, PARKER--YOU'RE TOO OLD TO CHANGE NOW.
I'M GOING TO FIND VERMIN AND... YES, DR. KAFKA..!... I'M GOING TO REMEMBER THAT, UNDERNEATH THE FUR AND FANGS, HE'S JUST A MAN.
JUST A MAN LIKE ME.

SO JUST TAKE A MOMENT TO RELAX. BREATHE DEEPLY. FEEL ALL THE TENSION DRAINING OUT OF YOU.

RELAX. WITH EVERY INWARD BREATH, ALL THE PAIN, ALL THE FEAR, IS FLOWING AWAY...

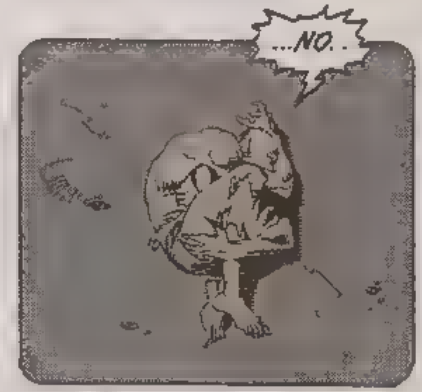
...AND YOU FEEL SAFE AND WARM. NOTHING CAN HURT YOU.

GOOD. THAT'S HOW YOU **SHOULD** FEEL.

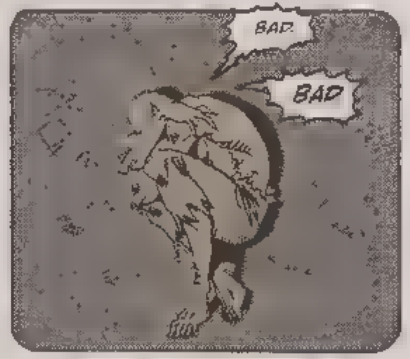
THAT'S HOW YOU'LL **KEEP** FEELING AS WE TAKE A LONG WALK, DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS SLOWLY. CAREFULLY. STEP-BY-STEP.

AND, WITH EACH STEP, ANOTHER DOOR INSIDE YOU IS GOING TO OPEN.. ANOTHER LAYER AROUND YOUR MIND IS GOING TO UNRAVEL. WE'RE GOING **BACK**... TO BEFORE BARON ZEMO DID THIS TO YOU.

..TO WHEN YOU WERE JUST A **BOY**




NO FEAR. BREATHE OUT.. LET THE FEAR FLOW **OUT**.




WHAT ? WHAT'S **BAD** ?

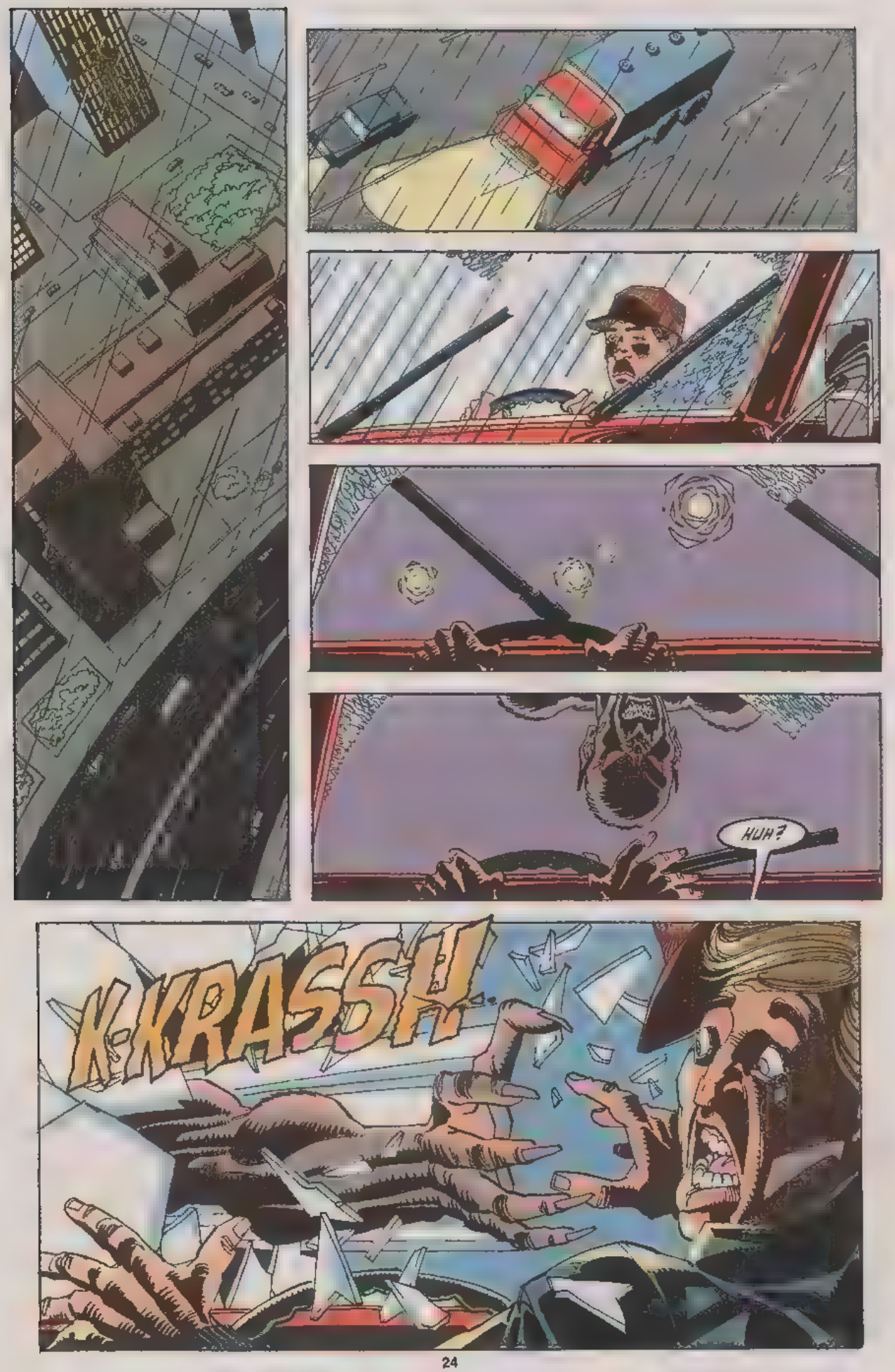
VERMIN ?

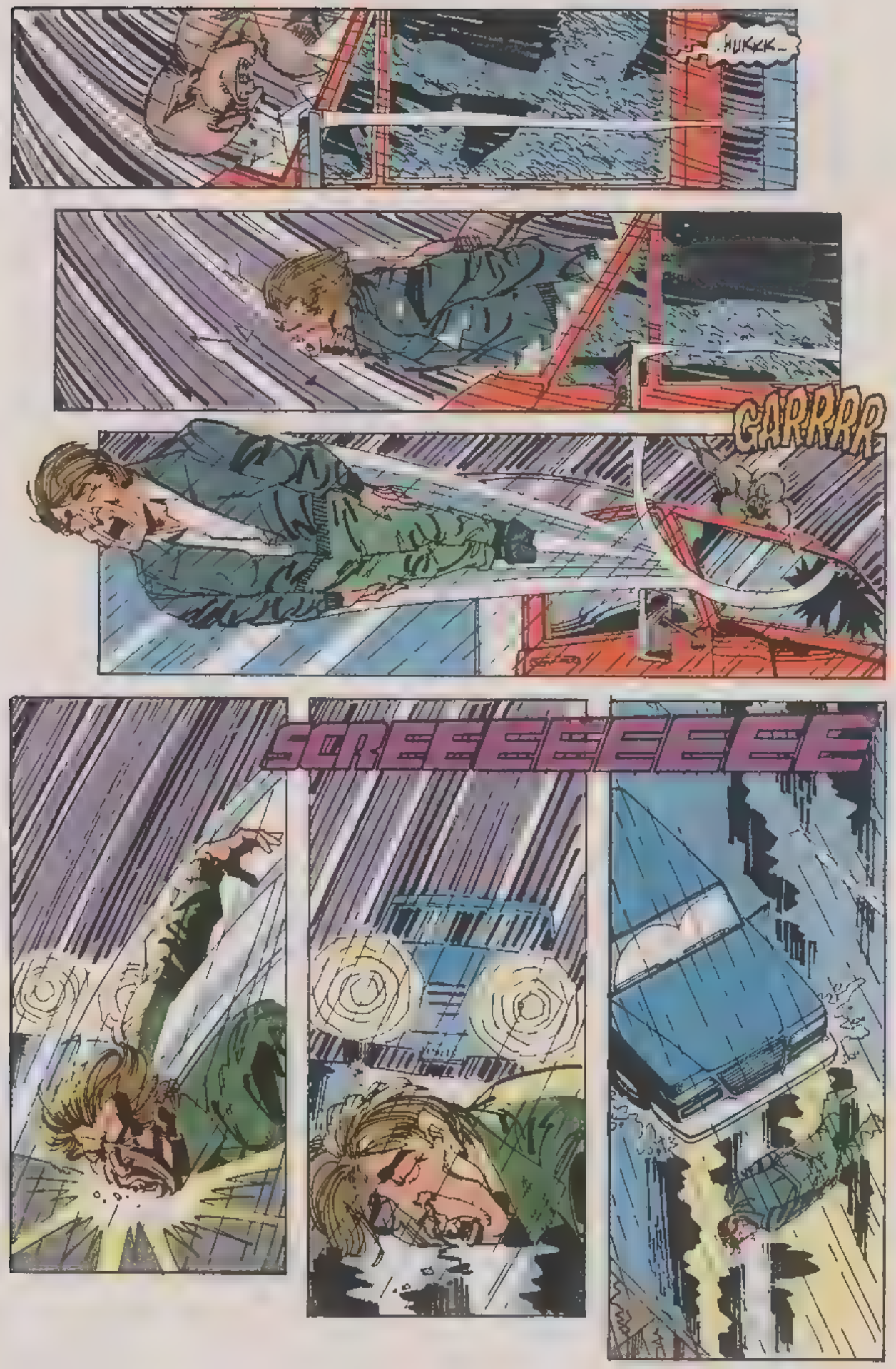
VERMIN ?

THAT'S IT. JUST SIT AND WATCH THE BLOODY TAPES OVER AND OVER AGAIN...
...AS IF IT'LL SOMEHOW BRING IT ALL BACK... MAKE IT ALL RIGHT.
DREAM ON.
KLIK
I KNOW VERMIN'S NO VILLAIN. I KNOW HE'S JUST ANOTHER VICTIM. I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THESE KINDS OF CASES MY WHOLE LIFE!
I WAS SO CLOSE!
BUT CLOSE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH.
I BLEW IT.
AND HE'S OUT THERE.
AND CHANCES ARE HE'S GOING TO KILL AGAIN.
AND IT'S MY FAULT.
SPIDER-MAN WAS RIGHT. VERMIN'S NO VICTIM. HE'S A MONSTER.
-E'S--

THERE!
I KNEW IF I KEPT AT IT, I'D FIND HIM.!
I'VE GOT YOU VERMIN.'
NO NEW VICTIMS TO ADD TO YOUR LIST.
HELP.! OH, GOD, SOMEBODY HELP.!!
NO MORE BLOOD--ON YOUR HANDS OR MINE.!
I VE GOT YOU..

...AND I'M NOT..
..GOING TO LET..
..YOU...?
DON'T HURT ME, MAN!
DON'T HURT ME!
GREAT..
.. NOW I'M JUMPING AT SHADOWS.
I NEED TO GET HOME... GET A GOOD NIGHT'S REST. TOMORROW I CAN START AGAIN.
TOMORROW?
TOMORROW MIGHT BE TOO LATE. HE COULD KILL AGAIN -- AND, IF HE DOES -- WON'T IT BE ON MY HEAD?
I'M NOT DOING ANYBODY ANY GOOD THIS WAY.
(YOU JUST HELPED THAT WOMAN, DIDN'T YOU?)
(YEAH, BUT I MIGHT JUST AS WELL HAVE HURT HER, THE STATE I'M IN.)
JUST LIKE UNCLE BEN--
JUST LIKE GWEN--
JUST LIKE--


HUH?
K-KRASSH!


...HUKKK...
GARRRRR
SCREEEEEEEEE

## STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes.

It had to happen! It's one of the most exciting new projects in years! Here's how it started.

Whenever I'm at a ComicCon or any place where there's a gaggle of frantic fans, I'm always asked questions like "What's Todd McFarlane really like?" or "How does Tom DeFalco manage to supervise so many titles?" or "Is it true that Chris Claremont's really a mutant?" etc. It seems that readers can't get enough information about their favorite comicbook people.

Well, since I always aim to please, I discussed this subject with a few other comicbook freaks and we came up with a dynamite idea.

Anyone who owns a video cassette player will now have a fantastic opportunity to see and learn about the world's most popular comicbook creators! I'm planning to interview most of the top talents in the biz in a series of collector's-item videos, which you'll be able to get at your favorite comicbook shop or video store!

In fact, by the time you read this, the first two videos may already be on sale. We're calling the series "THE COMICBOOK GREATS." Each video will be an in-depth, full-length interview with one of comicdom's top talents. You'll have a rare opportunity to see exactly how your favorite comicbook greats work while I hit them with the questions you yourself might want to ask. And, for once, I'll shut up long enough to let the other guys do most of the talking!

Of course, there's one serious problem! After seeing themselves on these fantastic cassettes, our video stars might give up comics and go into show biz! But we've got an ace in the hole! If Romita heads for Hollywood, we'll teach Schwarzenegger how to draw!

So 'till The Punisher buys a Barbie doll, see ya on video!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

*It's May, so those young scallawags up at Marvel Comics thought it would be a hoot to have somebody named May write this month's Battleship Barnacles Page. So, purely at random, they selected me, May Parker, beloved aunt of Peter Parker, that well-known photojournalist. Since making wheatcakes isn't taking up all my time anymore, I accepted the job (although, to be honest, I haven't read a comic book since the Yellow Kid was wearing yellow diapers.)*

*They told me I could write about whatever struck my fancy, but since it's been some time since I've had my fancy struck, I thought I'd tell you about my trip into the city two months back. I was strolling through Manhattan, looking for that special wool I need to knit some new sweaters, and I saw that nice young Mark Gruenwald, who is Executive Editor of Marvel Comics, and, who, by the way, is one of the most eligible bachelors in the city. Mark was holding a video camera, and was filming something he called the Marvel Talk Video.*

*The video will be shown at all the major comics conventions this year, and will feature all your favorite Marvel editors talking about their upcoming projects. But here's the peachy part — this video will feature the Marvel crew in their off hours so you'll get a glimpse of their personal lives. For instance, Hal Yordan will be seen performing with his group, the Bluescians, at a jazz club. Carl Potts will be fishing. Jim Salicrup will be seen at Troma film studios, home of Marvel's newest comic book, the TOXIC AVENGER.*

*As I continued to walk around the city, I saw a bunch of Marvel employees boarding a bus for a big ski trip. Now, I myself haven't skied in years, though in my day, I was quite a "hamburger," as they say. I also was quite a dancer — I could do a Lindy like nobody's business, and nobody could touch my foxtrot.*

*Why, with my husband, Ben, God rest his soul, I used to do a Charleston that would leave 'em gasping for air!*

*Oh, ahem, I seem to have strayed from the topic. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, the Marvel ski trip. It took place in March. About twenty Marvel persons headed up to the Berkshires in West Massachusetts, where they had a sociable, clean, outdoorsy experience together. It seems when four Marvel staff people — Sarra Mossoff, Rob Tokar, Kevin Kobasic, and Kevin Tang — went to the Berkshires in January, they had such a good time, these rapscallions decided to go back, and bring their friends with them!*

*Of course, skiing season is far behind us, and we're now entering into warmer weather, so you know what that means. Yes, it's time to start up a new season of bridge tournaments. I understand we're also entering softball season, so you can be sure the Marvel softball team is breaking out the pigskin and preparing for another big year. Young Evan Skolnick, who last year led Marvel to one of their first winning seasons in years, does not know if he's going to manage the team again. I wouldn't blame him if he didn't. The responsibilities of the position look like they've contributed to his premature hair loss, the poor boy . . .!*

*What's that? Oh...All right. I've been asked to mention some comic book conventions. Now, myself, I've never been to such a thing, but I do attend a couple of bake-offs every year and I imagine they're much the same, except you can't eat comics. I have a prize-winning cherry cobbler, which Anna Watson says is super-scrumptious. Come over sometime, and I'll give you a taste. Anyhow, here's what I'm supposed to tell you about the conventions . . .*

*The Chicago Comicon is June 28-30. For information, write 1219 West Devon, Chicago, IL 60660 or call (312) 743-4493. Guests will include Chris Claremont, Mark Bagley, Tom DeFalco, and Mark Gruenwald.*

*The San Diego Comicon is July 4-7. You may write PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458, or call (619) 491-2089, if you wish. Guests include Jim Lee, Chris Claremont, Jack Kirby, Fabian Nicieza, and Paul Ryan.*

*The Atlanta Comics Expo is July 12-14. Write Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362, or call (404) 925-2813 for details, if you're of a mind. Guests include Frank Miller, Al Williamson, Mark Bagley, Wayne Vansant, Ted McKeever, Bob Harras, and Terry Kavanagh.*

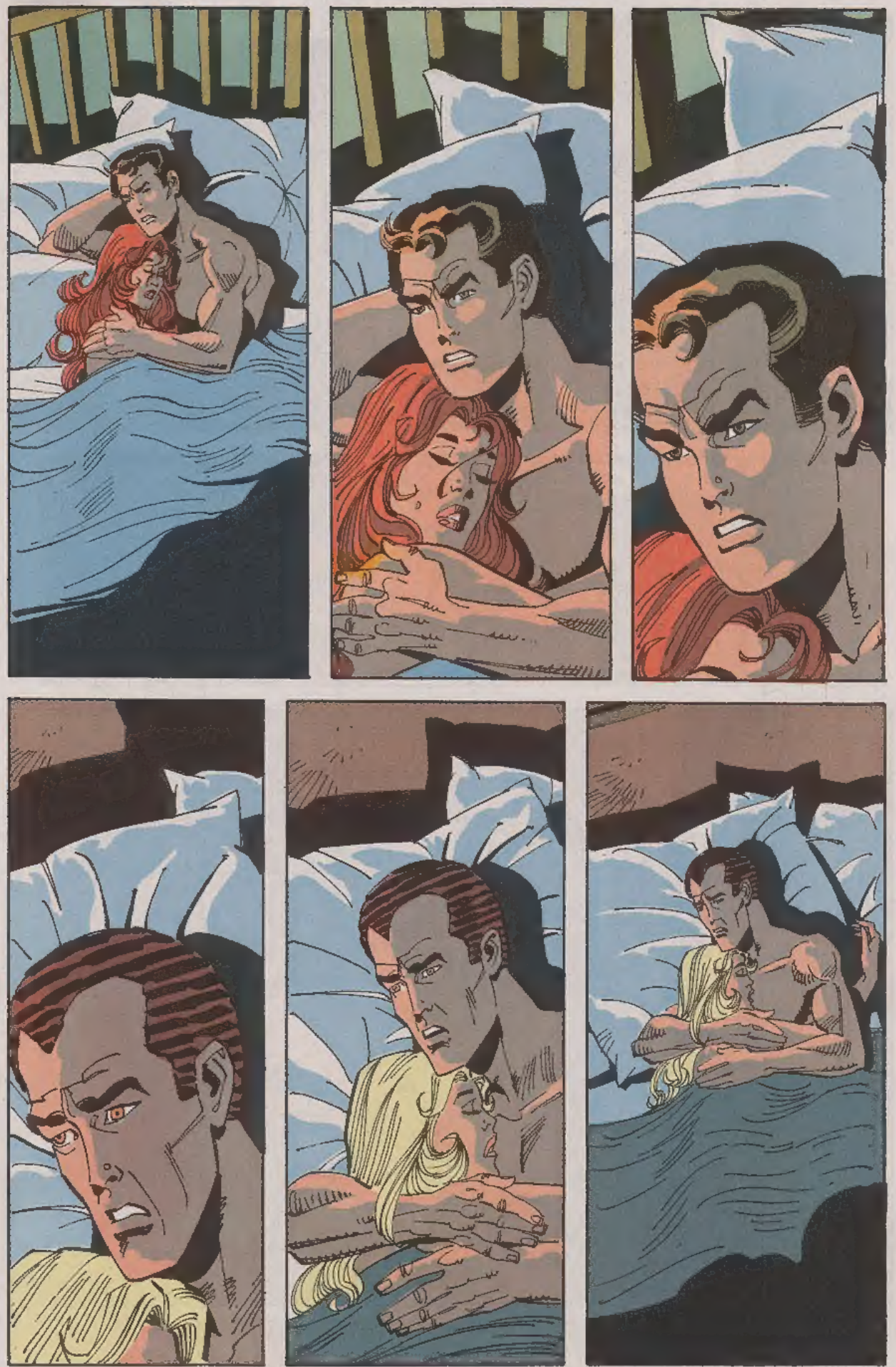
*The Dallas Fantasy Fair is July 19-21. Write PO Box 820488, Dallas, TX 75382, or call (214) 350-4305 if you want to know more. Guests include Carl Potts, Mike Kochevitz, Ron Frenz, and Rob Tokar.*

*The Atlanta Fantasy Fair is July 26-28. Write 4175 Eliza Ct., Lithonia, GA 30058, or call (404) 985-1230. Guests include Bob Budiansky, Alex Saviuk, Mark Bagley, Renée Witterstaetter, and Marie Javins.*

*My goodness! That took up space. I guess I can stop soon. I hope you enjoyed my Bullfrog Bugaloos Page. I'm glad I had the chance to write for a Marvel Comic although I admit I know next to nothing about comic books. Marvel publishes those books about that awful Spider-Man, that much I know.*

*Till next May, this is May Parker leaving you with a funny saying I heard a bobby-soxer tell his chum, "If I don't see you in the mattress, I'll see you in the spring!"*

WE'RE GOING HOME?
HOME!



NEXT: "THE CHILD WITHIN" CONTINUES IN...

PART TWO: WOUNDS!

# SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAIL

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387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

DANNY FINGEROTH
EDITOR
ERIC FEIN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

**Attention correspondents: All letters considered for publication must include your name and address, though we will withhold that information upon request.**

Dear Spider-Men,

Wow! What a treat issue #173 of SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN was. A jolly good Christmas was had by all, and when I got this issue, I was really excited. My favorite character having X-Mas at home. Forget all those Christmas movies! If you can do these stories at Christmastime all the time – they're the best!

David La Corte
9 Briar Road
Kettering, OH

**Well, David, if it's Christmas action you're looking for, you've got almost a whole year to wait. But there will be a special present under your tree this year, since Marvel will be presenting an all Christmas/Hannukah special around December.**

Dear Spider-Persons,

SSM #173 was heartbreaking! When Dr. Octopus had to beat a hasty retreat from his beloved, it was so tragic I almost cried. With fine touching stories like #173, Make Mine Marvel.

Kevin Dill
Vallejo, CA

**Seems you're not the only one who felt bad for the many-armed man...read on!**

Dear SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN,

I felt so bad when Spidey jumped the gun and made Doc Ock go away! I mean, all he wanted to do was wish Aunt May a Merry X-Mas. Who wouldn't? And so Spidey, without even giving him the "American" benefit of the doubt, charges Doc and makes him go away. Sure, Aunt May has Willie now (and boy, can his ears wiggle) but I don't think that she would ever turn and old friend away, especially at Christmastime. Shame on Spidey!

Jack Chan
(Address withheld by request)

**We're sure that Spidey would have felt sorry a thousand times over if only he knew why the good doctor was coming to visit Aunt May. It really wasn't Spidey's fault that he jumped the gun, though. Given Doc Ock's track record, we can understand why Spidey would be on the offensive. He'd never forgive himself if anything happened to Aunt May.**

Dear Spider-Guys,

I was very relieved after seeing SSM #174. The return of Doc Ock was much needed because of the lack of villains appearing in this comic! I thought that you guys were going soft on us fans. But at the end, you managed to pull through. But really, this comic needs a major villain. The last villain was the poor old Beetle, and he got a serious beating, too! How come I have never seen Venom, Spidey's most dangerous enemy, in a SSM comic before? Also, I've noticed that the fan mail has been getting a bit vicious lately and I think that those losers shouldn't write in anything at all if they don't have anything good to say. I think that Sal's art is some of the finest in Marvel and should not be criticized. The only problem I see in this comic is the lack of good villains to make a story interesting. Like Venom! Or anyone else!

Enzo DiPietro
156 Fiori Dr
Woodbridge Ontario
Canada

**Another vote is cast for the delightfully charming return of the man with more arms than a mannequin supply store. We're glad you liked it.**

**And, as far as other great villains, we've got Vermin right here in SPECTACULAR now, and Green Goblin'll be along soon. Over in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN, the Rose, Hobgoblin, and the Kingpin are coming up. And in AMAZING there's Doc Doom and the Tri-Sentinel. Enough great villains for ya?**

Dear SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN,

I just got done reading #174. What are you doing? I mean Doc Ock is about to kill MJ. The only thing that is holding him up is MJ trying to hold the arm. And also, how far can Doc Ock's tentacles go?

Chris Hospidar
6852 Santa Susana Pass Rd
Simi Valley, CA

**Doc Ock's tentacles were obviously long enough to hold onto Mary Jane in a grip so tight, even Spider-Man had some trouble freeing his beauteous bride.**

Dear Spider-Man,

Doc Ock's back. And it's about time too.

Actually, I realize it's only a couple of months since Ock last showed up in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN with the Sinister Six, but still, its seems that Ock has been neglected over the past few years. It took him a long time to get over his intense fear of Spidey, but even then, his appearances have been few and far between. Now he's back, and he's after Aunt May too. Maybe this time she'll come to realize what a creep he is.

Meanwhile, what's Nick Katzenberg doing? Whatever it is, it involves the Rose, and that's another villain that we haven't seen in a long time.

Rol Hirst
Rushgrove Farm
Holt Head, Slaithwaite,
Huddersfield, W. Yorks
ENGLAND

**Glad you enjoyed the issue, Rol, and we are certainly glad you also enjoyed the good Doctor's appearance. Stay tuned, for more tentacled excitement!**

Dear Web-Headed Wunderkinds,

Congrats on another terrific issue! Neo-Spidey editor Danny Fingeroth should be proud of the job the creative team did on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #174! Sal's art is the best! David Michelinie and Terry Kavanagh finished off Gerry Conway's plot with dialog worthy of the merry one himself! Colorist Joe Rosas also turned in a stellar performance, though I was a little confused with Lance and Joy's sudden change from blonde to brunette! All in all #174 was a modern masterpiece and believe me, I've seen PLENTY of them in this mag! Make Mine SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN forever!

Chris Mahoney
Buffalo, NY

**Gee, Chris, thanks for tootin' our horn! With fans like you, we know we're doing the right stuff. Now that you've got J.M. DeMatteis writing your favorite mag, you can go into a letter-writing frenzy, crazy with praise! And that goes for the rest of you, too!**

**NEXT ISSUE: *"The Child Within," part two*, in which Spidey comes face-to-face with Vermin, and Harry comes face-to-face with the madness of his past! If you thought *this* issue was something... just wait thirty days!**

**MEET 15 MORE**

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